

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
BLACKPOOL COASTAL HOUSING LIMITED
HELD AT COASTAL HOUSE, ABINGDON STREET, BLACKPOOL
ON WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER AT 6.00PM**

Present: Councillor N Brookes, Non-Executive Director (Chair)
Councillor J Hobson, Non-Executive Director
Councillor J Sloman, Non-Executive Director
Mr N Herring, Tenant Non-Executive Director
Mr A Szatkowski, Independent Non-Executive Director (via MS Teams)

In attendance: Mr J Donnellon, Chief Executive
Mrs M Cornall, Director of Operations
Mr M Towers, Company Secretary
Mrs J Stephenson, Assistant Company Secretary
Carl Robinson, Tower Scrutiny Panel
Julia Wadsworth, Tower Scrutiny Panel
Malcolm Davis (Chairman), Tower Scrutiny Panel
Dan Phillips, Tower Scrutiny Panel
Sylvia Agbareh, Tower Scrutiny Panel

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Dunstan, Director of Resources, Ms T Johnson, Independent Non-Executive Director and Mrs M Thompson, Independent Non-Executive Director.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that, Councillor Brookes, Non-Executive Director, and Councillor Hobson, Non-Executive Director declared an interest with regards to minute item 5, STAR Survey Update. Both advised the nature of the interest being that they were Ward Councillors for part of the area of discussion.

Accordingly, Councillors Brookes and Hobson stayed in the meeting and participated in the discussion.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 26 JULY 2023

The Board agreed: To approve the minutes of the Board meeting held on 26 July 2023, as a true and correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

All matters arising from the previous minutes had been completed or were covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5 TOWER SCRUTINY REPORT - DAMP AND MOULD

In a change to the order of items on the agenda the Chair agreed to bring forward the Tower Scrutiny Report to allow the Tower Group to leave the meeting at the end of this item.

Mr M Davis, Chairman of the Tower Scrutiny Panel reported on a review undertaken of the evaluation of the Damp and Mould Review in BCH properties.

The Panel had used a range of approaches to assist with the review:

- Bench marking with other housing providers
- Interviewed members of BCH staff
- Reviewed a range of service-related documents
- Online and postal surveys
- Followed up telephone calls

The Panel observed that BCH were very proactive in tackling damp and mould, and commended them on being a top tier social housing provider in the matter. In addition the Panel members thanked the BCH senior staff for the freedom and openness that enabled them to carry out such a detailed review.

The Panel made a number recommendations to BCH to manage these issues and these were summarised as follows:

- Tenant education
- Regular inspections and maintenance
- Clear communication strategies
- Staff training
- Staff to have personalise calling cards
- The development of Next Step guidance for tenants
- Tower Scrutiny to be informed of major works projects
- Contractors to continue to take before and after photo's
- Emphasis the tenant access to property policy at sign-up
- Ensure no barriers are in place with regards to non-English speaking tenants
- Detailed record keeping
- Develop the use of QR Codes for relevant information services

The Board Members thanked the Panel for the valuable work they had undertaken with regards to the Scrutiny of the Damp and Mould Review.

The Board agreed:

1. To work towards adopting the recommendations in the report
2. To add the monitoring of the Damp and Mould management plan to the BCH Audit tracker
3. To invite Tower Scrutiny Panel to a future meeting to provide feedback following the implementation of the recommendations (approximately 6 months)

6 AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES OF MEETING 13 SEPTEMBER 2023

Mr A Szatkowski, Independent Non-Executive Director and Chair of the BCH Audit Committee gave a brief overview of the meeting held on 13 September 2023.

With regards to Item 11, Strategic Risk Register, he advised that this was now overdue and reminded the committee that any significant changes to the register would require formal approval by the Board.

The Board agreed: To note the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 13 September 2023 as a true and correct record.

7 STAR SURVEY UPDATE

Mr R Jones, Performance Manager, Resources and Mrs S Lloyd, Performance Officer, Performance Team gave a detailed evaluation of the Final Report of the 2023 Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) and Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) which had been published in July 2023.

The survey had a response rate of 15.60%, whereby 826 out of a population of 5,224 General Needs and Sheltered Housing residents completed the survey. The survey provided the Board with themes with 11 neighbourhoods with the highest dissatisfaction.

The three main areas that were covered by the TSM questions and were currently receiving the highest level of dissatisfaction were; BCH's handling of complaints, BCH's approach to ASB and the condition of communal areas. It was acknowledged that in order to increase satisfaction with the overall service provided, priority should be given in improving those areas.

The Chair, Councillor Brookes raised concern with regards to the low return rate and noted that this could not always provide accurate results.

The Board Agreed:

1. To support BCH with future STAR surveys, with regards to improving participation and return rate.
2. To receive regular updates with regards to customer satisfaction at future meetings.

8 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Mr J Donnellon, Chief Executive, updated the Board on the significant developments that had arisen since the last Board meeting.

With regards to service standards, he distributed a copy of the 'Our Vision, Values and Service Standards' which would be provided to tenants. He advised that having and publicising the standards would be another step forward in their preparedness for a future regulatory inspection.

Mr Donnellon explained that BCH had been awarded the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Accreditation with all the key areas inspected either meeting or exceeding the required standard. He advised that a response to the draft report had been submitted and that the final report would be circulated to the board in due course.

Mr Donnellon reported that he had been approached by the Council's Director of Public Health to see if BCH can assist them in establishing a local radio station to promote well-being and healthy lifestyles. He explained that local authorities and government bodies were not allowed to bid directly for a licence, therefore BCH had been approached as a wholly owned but separately registered company.

Mr Donnellon reassured the Board that in terms of risk, Public Health would cover all licence and development costs so there would be no financial implications for BCH.

Staff from Public Health were in dialogue with OFCOM about the likelihood of success with the outlined approach but sought permission from the Board to proceed if the opportunity arose.

The Board agreed:

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To approve in principle the application to bid for the Licence to establish a local radio station to promote well-being and healthy lifestyles subject to the following conditions:
 - The Council would indemnify BCH in regard to any minimal regulatory risk.
 - BCH would retain some limited involvement in the governance arrangement to ensure BCH interests and reputation had the appropriate protections.

9 DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES' REPORT

Mr J Donnellon, Chief Executive presented to the Board the report in the absence of Mr S Dunstan, Director of Resources.

He advised that the Quarter 2 outturn figures would be circulated to members outside of the meeting.

Mr Donnellon advised the Board that BCH had been shortlisted in two categories in the Affordable Housing Awards. The awards would take place on the evening of 17 November in Manchester, he invited Board members to attend, and requested they contact himself, Ms Cornall or Mr Dunstan direct to arrange.

The Board agreed: To note the contents of the report.

10 DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS' REPORT

Mrs M Cornall, Director of Operations provided an update on the significant developments since the last Board meeting.

She reported that void levels had continued to reduce in line with expectations and had reduced considerably since the all time high in April 2022. Mrs Cornall stated that the service was having regular meetings with the Performance Team to better understand the Responsive Repairs performance. They had identified that 30% of all repairs were being recorded as Emergency Jobs, and that it is highly likely they were being recorded incorrectly, meaning that fewer resources were available to ensure routine repairs were meeting target. Training would be provided to those front line members of the team with regards to distinguishing the difference between the emergency repairs to routine repairs.

Ms Cornall reported that following the RAAC investigation, they were confident that the issue did not affect any of the BCH properties.

BCH and Jobs Friends & Houses (JFH) were in discussion with Public Health with regards to the concept of a Recovery Hub to help support wellbeing and positive activity for individuals and their families who were in recovery or wished to be in recovery from substance use.

Public Health and the partnership were keen for BCH to lead on the proposal to develop a Recovery Hub, particularly due to the link already established with JFH, and the commitment for BCH to develop the Revoe area, a likely permanent location for the Recovery Hub.

The Board agreed: In the principle to examine the possibility of BCH leading on the development of the Recovery Hub, but requested a full investigation prior to any decision being made with regards to the responsibilities, liabilities and impact on BCH.

11 MEMBER RELATIONS

Mr Donnellon, Chief Executive and Mr Szatkowski, (via Teams link), Chair of the BCH Audit Committee had presented the Board and Audit Annual Reports to the Shareholder Committee on 12 October 2023, they reported the documents had been well received.

12 WORK PROGRAMME

Mr J Donnellon, Chief Executive advised the Board that the next meeting would take place on the 6 December 2023 at 2.30pm in conjunction with the BCH Strategy Event.

The Board agreed:

1. To note its rolling work programme for 2023/24.
2. To amend the agenda for the 6 December Board meeting as appropriate to compliment the work being undertaken at the strategy event.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 6 DECEMBER 2023

The Committee noted the date and time of the next meeting as Wednesday 6 December 2023, commencing at 2.30pm.

15 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024

The Board agreed the programme of Board and Audit Committee meeting dates for 2024:

Board – All meetings held at Coastal House at 5pm

Wednesday 6 March 2024

Tuesday 30 April 2024

Wednesday 10 July 2024 (Accounts)

Wednesday 16 October 2024

Wednesday 11 December 2024

Audit Committee – All meetings held on Microsoft Teams at 6pm

Wednesday 10 January 2024

Tuesday 19 March 2024

Wednesday 12 June (Draft Accounts) 2024

Wednesday 25 September 2024

16 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT REPORT (CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND BOARD MEMBERS ONLY)

Due to the confidential nature of this item the minutes have been circulated under



separate cover to Board members and the Chief Executive only.

The meeting ended at 7.04 pm

Signed by the Chairman

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Councillor Neal Brookes

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